

Tenant Action News

Vol. 3 No. 1

Serving Newark Tenants

Summer 1992



Residents of Clinton Arms Apartments have given their building a new look by planting 19 trees around it. The work crew included many young residents of the building. The trees were obtained with the help of the Greater Newark Conservancy, a program which helps beautify lots and plant gardens throughout the city.

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Around Town

Garden Spires Problems Continue

Tenants at Garden Spires, 175 & 195 1st St., continue to face serious problems: no hot water on weekends, some tenants without heat, unlocked front doors, no armed security guard and growing drug traffic in and around the building.

Tenants who have been locked out have paid up their rent, and come back to their apartments, only to find much of their property stolen. Other tenants have been taken to court even though their rents were paid up. This means they had to take a day off of work - just because of the poor record keeping at Garden Spires. Tenants are not receiving rent receipts. Other tenants have been promised new appliances but have not received them.

All of these are reasons why tenants will be pushing "until we get less talk and more action to solve the problems at our building," as one tenant put it.

MacEvoy Towers Improving

Tenants at MacEvoy Towers, 140 Roseville Ave., have seen some improvements in their building since they got a new owner in late October 1991. The new owners have moved many people who were causing problems out, and the building now has a 24 hour armed security guard. The elevators are running, and the company is working to solve the heat problems and the problems with fungus. The roof is being worked on too. The new owners are carefully screening new people who move in, and applications are being taken every Saturday.

St. James Towers Literacy Program Going Strong

St. James Towers, 440 Washington St., has a new on site management company, and so far there are some improvements, according to the tenants. The elevators are running and the building is generally cleaner.

St. James Literacy Program has doubled its enrollment! Volunteers from the building tutor children and young people from the building. They have taken 2 trips to the Newark Public Library, and are planning a trip to the Museum. They are hoping to set up a movie night for young people during the summer also.

Zion Towers

New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency and HUD recently approved a 33% rent increase at Zion Towers, 515 Elizabeth Ave. According to the tenants, this was an illegal rent increase. There was no 30 day notice of the petition for rent increased posted in the lobby as required by HUD regulations. Tenants were not given 30 day notification of a pending increase. They were given a letter that their rent **was increased**, but they would be paying the same amount due to an increase in their subsidies. The 33% rent increase prices the apartments far above the market value of apartment rentals in the City of Newark.

Meanwhile, according to the tenants, conditions at Zion Towers include problems with drug sales in and around the buildings, inadequate screening for incoming tenants, lack of proper maintenance, and infestation with rodents.

Around Town

Douglass-Harrison Apartments

Tenants at Douglass-Harrison Apartments still wonder how they can get problems at their complex resolved. The owner is New Community Corporation, and tenants are asking how they can get poor conditions in their building remedied. Tenants point out that New Community has expanded its properties to Jersey City and to Florida, but that they can't get them to take steps to correct problems at Douglass-Harrison. Questions which were raised to the New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency concerning money which was given to make certain repairs at Douglass-Harrison were not completely answered. Tenants had asked why repairs needed to be made **again** when substantial amounts were given to repair the same item recently. For example, tenants got a new roof last year, and yet a new roof is getting ready to be put on. The same repairs are listed in 3 proposals for rent increases, and tenants want to know why? There are many vacant apartments, and tenants want to know if New Community is receiving a continuing subsidy from HUD for the vacant apartments. These are just a few of the questions tenants are asking that need answers.

Georgia King Village News

Georgia King Village has a new manager, who is willing to work with the tenants and the Tenants Association, and there have been some improvements in the buildings. The Tenants Association is starting programs for the children all year around. If anyone is interested in more information call Mrs. Frances Houston, Tenant President, at 624-5192.

A proposed rent increase of 25% was defeated recently, with active opposition from the Tenants Association. Mrs. Houston wishes to

thank Paul Giordano, of Essex Newark Legal Services, Milt Zisman, of Accountants for the Public Interest, Frank Hutchins, Nancy Zak, and Senator/Councilman Rondald Rice for their help.

2 Keer Ave: Celebrating Survival!

Tenants at 2 Keer Ave. are patting themselves on the back, and rightly so, for having survived for surviving the winter. Just before winter began, their landlord declared bankruptcy. The tenants banded together, one hundred percent. They pooled their money, got a lawyer, and with his advice, began to do things themselves. They got repairs made on the boiler, and filled up the oil tank, so they were comfortable all winter. When emergencies happened, they took money out of the rent to fix them. They did their own snow and garbage removal, monitored the boiler themselves, and even cleaned up a sewage problem themselves. They kept close records of everything they did, and when the bankruptcy proceedings were held, the tenants were commended for their accurate records. "We banded together and we beat the odds," said one tenant, "And we are very proud of ourselves." Now the tenants are looking for a buyer for their building, and have some prospects. Congratulations to the 2 Keer Ave. tenants for their determination and hard work.



Around Town

"Do The Right Thing" Tenants Association

"Do The Right Thing" Tenant Association has been organized at Spruce Spires for over a year. During that time, in addition to holding regular tenant meetings, tenants have done a number of other things. They conducted their own building inspections, including extensive photographs, which were then given to the landlord. The landlord did make some repairs, but not to the tenants' complete satisfaction.

Tenants gave a major presentation at a City Council meeting, where 30 tenants attended, and about half that number spoke. The Tenants Association helped to protect a number of people who had received lock-out notices from being evicted by providing information. The Tenants Association held 2 clean up days around the buildings, and a Block Party.

Spruce Spires, located at 717, 719 and 725 Martin Luther King Blvd. and 90, 94 and 100 Spruce St., is owned by the same owner as Garden Spires. The complex has become a central focus for the "Newark Fighting Back" effort that is currently being carried out by a number of groups.

Tenants at Spruce Spires went from having nothing, to having a decent organization, and a number of excellent activities and results.



Stratford Apartments Block Party

Stratford Apartments Tenants Association held a Block Party last summer, which featured a drill team of young people from their building. The Tenants Association at Stratford Apartments has also begun a newspaper, called "New Beginnings", which tenants write and produce themselves.

Van Velsor Place Tenants Association

Tenants at 25 Van Velsor Place, where there has been a very active Tenants Association, have gotten some security at their building, which has helped to clean up a serious drug problem in and around the building. The Tenants Association also got code enforcement in to force the owner to make some repairs. The building also has a new superintendent. The Tenants Association has also turned over evidence to the Prosecutor's Office concerning the owner claiming vacant apartments which were not really vacant in his applications for funds from various programs.

" We Must Unite!" - Tenant Conference A Big Success

"There is no reason one of the richest countries in the world has people sleeping in the street."

"We are spending a larger and larger portion of our income on housing, but the places we live are becoming more and more inferior."

"We have got to unite and organize in ever larger numbers."

"Tenants don't need to go see scary movies, because we can get scared every 1st of the month, not knowing whether or not we will have the rent money."

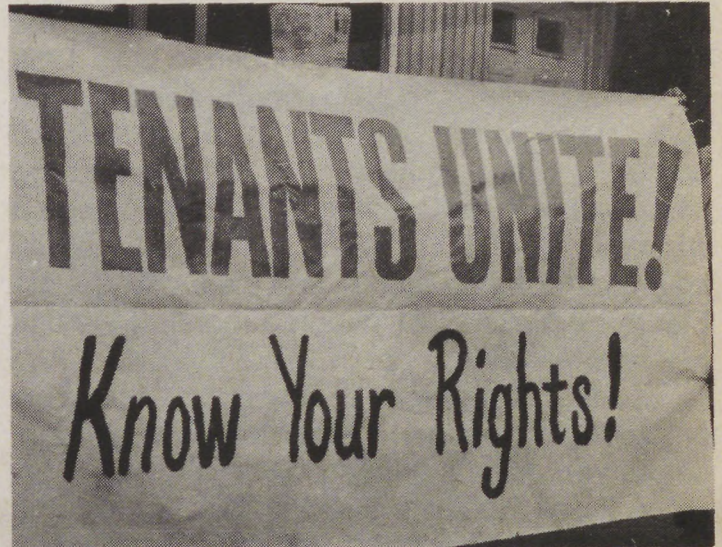
The speaker was Lawrence Hamm, from Peoples Organization for Progress, and the occasion was the Tenant Rights Conference, held on October 26 at Grace Episcopal Church in Newark.

More than 150 people, most of them tenants, attended the Conference, which was organized by tenants from the **HUD Tenants' Coalition** and the **Coalition To Save Rent Control**, and co-sponsored by a variety of other groups.

The tenants had a choice of 7 different workshops they could attend, including: Know Your Rights, Where's The Proof: How To Analyze A Rent Increase Application?, the Newark Rent Control Law, Public Housing, HUD Buildings: Getting Your Landlord To Do His Job, Organizing A Tenant Association, and Know Your Rights in Spanish.

The general session of the program featured the thought provoking entertainment of Professor Louie, and the keynote speech by Mr. Hamm.

Mr. Hamm pointed out that none of the laws which are on the books came about without a struggle. "Landlords, private or public, could not do what they do to us if we would unite and fight," he said. He encouraged tenants to make



demonstrations and protests "a part of life - something we need to teach our children."

Mr. Hamm criticized federal policies which refuse to raise the minimum wage or extend unemployment benefits but which "bail out oil rich Kuwait, and send our soldiers to die in a country where the majority of people can't vote."

He publically thanked the Conference organizers, saying that "no one gives out awards for talking about injustice in housing, or for picketing HUD."

"When the newspapers and television talk about a housing crisis, they are talking about single family homes not selling as quickly as they used to. We're talking about not even being able to pay the high rents we have. Many of us are just a hop, skip and jump away from being homeless ourselves."

Council President Donald Tucker paid a surprise visit to the Conference. "I do not intend to forget the plight of tenants. I have no intention of eliminating, or in any way whatsoever weakening, the rent control laws. The laws need to be tightened up based on your interests, not

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Tenant Conference Continued

(from page 5)

the landlords. This City has not been sensitive to tenants."

Council President Tucker said that the Housing Authority has been funded to build 1759 units of subsidized housing, which have not been built. He pointed out that there are 18,000 homeless people in Newark, and that a housing complex like New Community Coporation has a waiting list of 10,000. He also stated that the City spends \$100,000 a month, and the Essex County Freeholders spend \$1 million a month, to house homeless families in hotels.

He encouraged tenants to continue organizing. "Change is not going to happen, unless you make it happen."

Frank Hutchins and Nancy Zak, from the HUD Tenant Coalition, presented several awards to people who have made a large contribution to the fight for tenant rights. Marianne Tolomeo, a lawyer with a private firm in Newark, who has handled a number of cases for tenants when they could not get legal help elsewhere, received an award. Other awards went to Geraldine Howard, tenant president at 25 Van Velsor Pl., for her hard work and long fight, and to Richard Cammarieri, from Newark Coalition for Neighborhoods, for his tenant organizing.

Among those who lent their expertise at the workshops were: Miguel de la Carrerra (private attorney), Felipe Chevana, Cesar Torres, and Paul Giordano from Essex Newark Legal Services, Peggy Earisman from Passaic County Legal Services, Mrs. Frances Houston, tenant president from Georgia King Village, Steve Finn and other members of the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing, Ms. Synthia James from the Newark Rent Control Board, and Mr. John Demetrius from Accountants for the Public Interest. Donations for the Conference were given by a number of tenant organizations, individual tenants and city officials.

"The workshops were excellent. I learned a great deal," said one enthusiastic tenant after the Conference. "We should do this again."



Tenants from around the city helped set up and staff a Tenant Rights Table at the Newark Festival of People. People were able to ask their questions, and receive lots of information about their legal rights.

Newark Groups Working With Tenants

These groups can advise, help organize, put you in contact with others who have had your problem and solved it, help you get legal help, and tell you what tenants are doing city wide.

- **Coalition To Save Rent Control**

Frank Hutchins

923-3500

Nancy Zak

344-7208

- **Newark Coalition For Low Income Housing**

For tenants in public housing.

Ask for Steve Finn 484-8833

- **Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry**

Housing Task Force. Ask for Nancy Zak

481-6650

- **HUD Tenants' Coalition**

Frank Hutchins

923-3500

- * **Newark Coalition For Neighborhoods**

Richard Cammarieri, 643-7711

Coalition Calls For Receivership In Public Housing

On Dec. 26, 1991, the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing (NCLIH) made a formal request to the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) that an independent person (known as a "receiver") be appointed. The receiver would be in charge of building the new apartments which are supposed to be built according to the 1989 Settlement Agreement approved by the Federal Court between the Housing Authority and NCLIH.

The Newark Housing Authority has said that it will **not** hire a receiver. Instead, it will set up a Task Force made up of local, state and federal officials to monitor the construction.

NCLIH sued the Housing Authority when it began dynamiting public housing buildings in 1987. The court ordered that no further demolitions could take place until construction was started on new apartments to replace them. 1777 apartments were supposed to be built.

"Too much time has already been wasted," said Vic De Luca, chairperson for NCLIH at a press conference. "Since the first demolition at Scudder Homes in May 1987, only 1 unit of housing was built. No other new townhouse projects have been started over those 55 months. The NHA's many management problems and terrible track record on development show that the agency is incapable of constructing 1777 new apartments called for in the Settlement Agreement. The NHA is suffering from institutional paralysis and a receiver must be appointed to ensure that safe and decent low income housing is built quickly and competently."

In their letter to HUD, NCLIH warns that \$110,000,000 worth of construction is at stake unless HUD takes action. Said David Weiner, another member of NCLIH and president of Local



Tenants at Hayes Homes demonstrated at City Hall to call attention to poor conditions in their buildings.

1981 Communication Workers of America, "With millions of dollars of taxpayers hard earned money at risk, HUD must intervene and appoint a receiver to protect the public's interests."

The letter summarized the Coalition's reasons for demanding a receiver after looking at the NHA's track record:

- * Poor construction track record and too much delay
 - * Behind in the court construction schedule for the first 6 projects covered by the Settlement Agreement
 - * Construction record marked by complete failures, shoddy construction, and wasting funds.
 - * Past allegations of corruption in construction
 - * Deficiencies in record keeping and lack
- cont. on page 8**

Receivership

continued from p. 7

of planning

* Mismanagement throughout the agency

The letter also charged that the Housing Authority has misled the public as to when construction would begin. As many as 5 changes in the original construction schedule have been announced. The NHA misled the public by holding a "groundbreaking" for one project in April of 1991. No construction has begun. NHA Commissioner Montayne called the groundbreaking "a sham, a great embarrassment" and "a fiasco" at the Sept. 19, 1991 NHA Board meeting. The new date for construction to begin is March 1992, a year after the original groundbreaking ceremony.

"With 6500 people on the waiting list for public housing and other public housing tenants living in dilapidated conditions, it is immoral that delays of this size have existed. Now is the time for the federal government to use its authority to prevent further postponements by appointing a receiver to make certain that new housing will be built promptly," said Rev. Willie Simmons, another NCLIH member.

Construction that NHA has done has been shoddy. Apartments that were begun at the Scudder Home site toppled over during a windstorm before they were finished.

At Baxter Terrace, a former architect for the NHA notified his superiors in March of 1988 that almost half of the \$1.9 million available to remodel the units was spent, and only one fourth of the work was done. NHA did not stop the work until 13 months later in mid-1989.

In another case, NHA violated the federal bidding requirements, by providing a developer with land, thus allowing this developer to gain an unfair advantage over other builders.

Receivers have been appointed to build new public housing in Chicago, and to run public housing in Boston.

New Owner, New Management At Forest Hill Apartments

by Janice Adams

Forest Hill Terrace Apartments, located in the North Ward, has yet another new owner and out of state management firm. Tenants have no idea what the fate of the complex will be. They have heard that Midatlantic Bank, the new owner, is repackaging a new condo offer ("One we won't be able to refuse!" said one tenant). Rumor also has it that apartments may be available as rentals again, probably with an option to buy.

Readers may remember that Forest Hill Apartments was a fully occupied rental apartment complex before it was sold for condo conversion, against the objections of the Tenants Association.

What tenants do know is that a once viable apartment complex which provided affordable housing for working class people has been reduced to a veritable ghost town with half the apartments empty. Forest Hill Terrace stands as a stark testament to the failure of condo conversion to provide affordable housing, especially in a city where so many people are getting a minimum wage.

However, there are those small victories in the face of what seem like insurmountable odds, which make the struggle to protect tenant rights worthwhile. Because the new owners failed to properly notify tenants of the annual rent increase, tenants will not be paying the increase until properly notified.

Tenants at Forest Hill Terrace Apartments no longer have Richard Cammarri as President of their Tenant Association. Even though his expertise will still be available to tenants, tenants will miss his "boundless energy, self-sacrifice, dedication, and his ability to get the job done." Thank you Richard!

Estimated 5000 Tenants Evicted In Essex County In 1991

In 1991, 52,000 eviction complaints were filed by landlords in Essex County, resulting in 19,704 eviction notices issued by judges. Court officials estimate that 5000 tenants were actually locked out of their apartments.

Essex County lead the state in the number of eviction complaints filed by landlords in 1990: 49,607. The next highest County was Hudson County, with 22,480.

"The number of evictions does not surprise me," said Mr. Frank Hutchins from the HUD Tenants' Coalition. "Times are hard, and people are having trouble making ends meet. We have landlords who are raising rents 25 and 30% in some buildings. People just cannot afford this kind of an increase. They cannot pay it."

The total number of eviction complaints filed statewide in 1990 was 165,700. There are no real records to show how many evictions actually take place. County court officials and officials at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Trenton say they do not normally keep statistics on tenancy matters.

"It seems as though records about tenant matters should be kept, since it is important to know what is happening to tenants. So many people are tenants," said Frank Hutchins from the HUD Tenants' Coalition in Newark. "Tenants are also residents and taxpayers in this state."

In the past, the very poor were the ones who faced eviction. Currently, working tenants are also in trouble.

"We are seeing working people, possibly because they got laid off or had to take a lesser paying job or because of medical bills," said Gerry Brennan from the Legal Aid Society of Morris County. "It's people who normally would have been able to pay their rent."

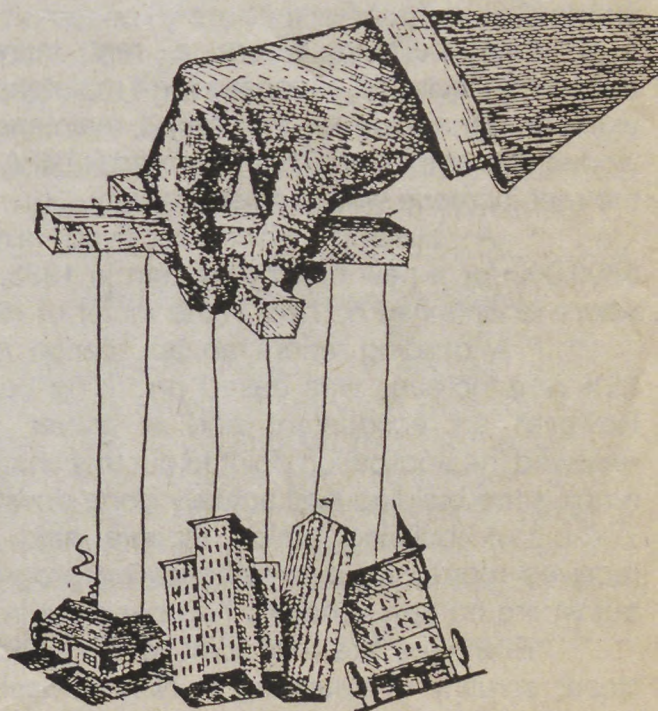
Brenan has been handling eviction cases for the last 10 years. In the past, he would go to housing court occasionally. Now he is there every court session (once a week in Morris County).

Some tenants are older persons, others may have lived in an apartment for many years. Still others may be attending college at night after work. Many are single parents.

"We are finding middle class people who have been working (facing eviction actions). I would say we are finding more older people," said another lawyer.

"I expect things will get worse and there will be more evictions if the economy continues to get worse," said Mr. Hutchins. "The other question is where do these people go, or do we have 5000 more homeless people on the street?"

This article is based on information taken from the Star Ledger, Jan. 19, 1992.



HUD Coalition Questions NJMFA Spending

Members of the HUD Tenants' Coalition of Newark have called for closer scrutiny of buildings financed by the New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency (NJMFA). The Coalition's written comments were submitted to NJMFA at a recent public hearing on a proposed bond issue to raise money for NJMFA's housing activities.

"The HUD Tenants' Coalition is not opposed to the issuing of bonds for the NJMFA for use in the housing developments in which it is involved," said Frank Hutchins, HUD Tenants' Coalition member. "However, we believe that NJMFA must monitor the spending of tax dollars it receives far more closely than they currently do. NJMFA should make certain that work for which dollars are given is actually completed. We also believe that NJMFA should make certain that expenditures which are claimed by owners/managers as a basis for financing are **real** (not just expenditures on paper), and that costs projected in rent increase applications are accurate."

The Coalitions' letter to NJMFA outlined instances in the past where NJMFA has not performed its oversight functions as carefully as it should:

- * A building where a rent increase application included expenses for 4 maintenance workers. Tenants knew that only 1 maintenance worker was employed. They informed NJMFA, but the rent increase was granted anyway.

- * A building which received almost \$800,000 for a new heating system in 1985, but where tenants had no heat in the winter of 1990.

- * A building where an application for a 25% rent increase was based on "rising costs". However an accountant and a lawyer who reviewed the application pointed out that costs for running the building had actually gone down.

- * A building which tenants said had received money for a "weatherization program", but where no new windows had been put in.

"Examples like this point to the need for closer scrutiny of spending in NJMFA assisted

projects," said Mr. Hutchins.

The Coalition called on NJMFA to:

- * Refuse continual rent increases or grants to owners with track records of continual poor management. Make grants and increases contingent on property free of code violations and major tenant complaints.

- * Involve tenants in the discussion of what work should be a priority in the buildings. Verify with tenants whether work has been done to their satisfaction, and whether claimed expenses are real.

- * Develop policies which give incentives to well managed buildings, rather than reward owners for mismanagement.

- * Review rent increase applications more closely for obvious inconsistencies.

"Tenants and taxpayers sometimes wonder where their money is going when large infusions of capital continue, but conditions in the buildings continue to decline," said Mr. Hutchins. "These dollars should be carefully monitored, and questions which are raised about spending and building conditions should be fully answered. NJMFA should not be in the business of perpetuating or rewarding poor management. Tenants living in these buildings and paying rent deserve decent homes."

Copies of the Coalitions' comments were sent to political leaders of both parties at the state and federal level, the Office of the Public Advocate, New Jersey Legal Services, and other housing advocates. For more information contact: Nancy Zak, 344-7210.



"Responsible Management"

State Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden was the only state government official contacted who responded to the **HUD Tenants' Coalition** testimony about the bond issue. Assemblywoman Ogden said in part:

"I agree with the Coalition's position calling for closer monitoring of housing conditions in buildings which have received financing from the NJMFA. This is no more than responsible management of taxpayers' and the State's investments."

Senator Frank Lautenberg and Senator Bill Bradley also responded to the **HUD Tenants' Coalition** positively. Senator Bradley's letter said, "I agree that taxpayers and tenants should be confident that their dollars are being spent effectively."

National HUD Tenants Alliance Formed

A national group of tenants from HUD assisted buildings was formally organized at the March 1992 Conference of the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

The group, called the **National Alliance of HUD Tenants**, had been in communication informally for many months. At the Conference, elections of representatives from various parts of the country were held.

The new national group will be working on getting improved conditions in HUD assisted buildings, and monitoring and responding to new HUD programs which affect their buildings.

The **HUD Tenants' Coalition** of Newark is a member of the national group. "We are very excited about this development," says Nancy Zak, from the Newark Coalition. "Hopefully this group will be a voice for those who are most directly affected by HUD's policies toward these HUD-assisted buildings: the residents themselves."

National Expert Meets With HUD Tenants

The **HUD Tenants' Coalition** held a "Getting To Know You" meeting April 21 with a special visitor: Mr. Larry Yates from the **National Low Income Housing Coalition** in Washington, D.C.

The Newark HUD Tenants' Coalition has been on the phone many times with Mr. Yates, but this was the first chance to meet face to face.

Mr. Yates has been monitoring developments in HUD-financed buildings around the country for many years. He has also been monitoring all the various HUD programs, such as HOME, HOPE, etc. He helped to bring about the formation of the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (see separate article), setting up conference calls from tenants in HUD buildings all around the United States.

Mr. Yates visited a number of HUD buildings in Newark to see the deplorable conditions. He said that such conditions were nothing new to him. He has seen and heard of similar conditions in HUD buildings all around the country.

"It is so important that tenants in these HUD buildings be organized and active. You have got to demand the services you are entitled to. I am impressed by the Coalition's track record, the number of things you have done together, and the ways you have put pressure on local government and on HUD to get things done. I hope you will continue to work hard and organize more and more of the HUD buildings in your area."

Need Help With Recertification?

Are you a tenant in a privately owned "HUD building" (where HUD or the New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency are involved)? Do you have to go through rent recertification each year? Does it seem complicated and confusing? If you have questions about your recertification, contact Newark Coalition For Neighborhoods, 643-7711, for assistance.

Hill Manor Tenants Working Hard

Hill Manor tenants are organized and working hard, and getting some good results.

Tenant Association Officers and floor captains met with their lawyer, John Jacobi, and students from Rutgers Law School, several times to discuss strategies about how to improve Hill Manor Apartments. Together they had gathered a great deal of information in preparation for filing litigation when they learned that Hill Manor was getting a new owner. HUD promised that a condition of sale to the new owner was improving conditions in the building.

Since then, the Tenant Association decided

to try to meet with the new management company and with HUD. HUD has agreed to meet with the tenants before transferring ownership of the building to discuss building conditions. Meanwhile, tenants have their second meeting with the management scheduled for May. Tenants will be meeting with the resident manager every other week on a regular basis.

Conditions in the building are improving in some respects, and not in others. But the group continues to push HUD, the owner and the management company. As long as a dialogue and results continue, the Tenant Association has decided to delay legal action.

Job Training At HUD

That was the title of an editorial in the StarLedgey May 18, 1991 calling for a bill which would require training for all public housing authority commissioners and executive directors. "Many commissioners act as rubberstamping authorities for the authority's executive director. As a direct result, these commissioners are susceptible to manipulation by the authority's management."

The Star Ledger said the idea that "Regulators ought to know something about the field they are to regulate" is a "good one." Indeed the application could go well beyond housing authorities. Too many so-called autonomous agencies have commissioner boards that are often used as political payoffs to reward the faithful."

"Training programs might help," the Ledger said. Tenants think it would take more than training programs, but it would be a step in the right direction.

Buttons Available



50 cents each.

White letters on Red background.

Proceeds to benefit
Coalition To Save Rent Control

Order Yours Today

Sell them at your events and help raise
money for the Tenant News!



Not Enough Inspectors? Hire More!

Tenants were shocked recently when former head of Newark's HUD Regional Office, Theodore Britten, admitted that there was only 1 inspector for HUD assisted buildings in the whole state.

Locally, things are not much better. Millard Monroe, manager of the city's division of Inspections and Enforcement, said recently that some building violations go unrecorded because his office is understaffed and ill-equipped to render professional opinions (Star Ledger, Dec. 20, 1991). Monroe said the number of inspectors in his office was cut by 50% and said the challenge faced by inspectors is as daunting as "trying to paint a huge wall with just one gallon of paint."

"No wonder we can't get these landlords into court faster," said one tenant. "There is just too much to do, and not enough people to do it. The City and HUD should have more inspectors if they really want to do the job right."

Essex County Judges Read This:

Landlord Sentenced To Live In His Building

(excerpted from Star Ledger article by Dory Devlin, Jan. 18, 1992)

A Morristown landlord was sentenced to lived for 30 days in his own drug-plagued, roach-infested building following a 4 hour municipal hearing on charges he was "maintaining a nuisance."

"When you're there, you can smell the urine, hear the cockroaches...You can lay in bed at night afraid some drug addict is going to come in shooting at you, and maybe you'll know how your tenants feel," Municipal Court Judge Michael Noonan told Frank Oliver, the landlord from Wayne. "It's your house. Clean it up."

In reaching his decision, Judge Noonan cited testimony by police and the town's chief code enforcement officer that crack vials, used condoms, bottles and other debris were often found in the hallways, human feces was found in the elevator and stairwells, dried blood was stuck on the walls, and the stench of urine pervaded the building.

Town officials also testified that there was no full-time superintendent for several months, the lock on the front door often was broken and the intercom system was unusable, while sewage backed up in a hallway and trash piled up in the basement.

"There's no security in this place, Mr. Oliver," the Judge yelled.

The Judge said he opted for the live-in sentence rather than only imposing a fine because he thought a fine might be construed by Oliver as merely "the cost of doing business" as the landlord of a rundown, crime-ridden building.

No fine was issued, the Judge said, because he wants any money Oliver would pay the town to be spent on improving the building.

Tenants' Rights Workshops Available

Do you belong to a group that wants to learn its legal rights as tenants? Call and arrange a tenant rights workshop.

Recently Frank Hutchins and Nancy Zak gave workshops at St. Columba's Neighborhood Club, and at several parent meetings of the Newark Pre-School Council. Here are some of the reactions to their workshops:

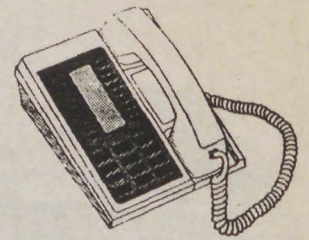
"The video **Techos Y Derechos** was one that participants could really identify with.. Thank you for the terrific housing workshop."

"Your comments were helpful and I believe people now will try to take positive action to address some of their housing problems."

"I found the workshop helpful to me as a social worker helping single parents and single heads of households. This information will be very valueable to them."

If you would like to arrange a workshop - in English or Spanish - for your church or parent group, or your building, call Frank at 923-3500 or Nancy at 344-7210. Spanish language speakers are also available, along with the videotape called "Techos Y Derechos" in Spanish.

This issue of **Tenant Action News** was published with the help of: Madelyn Hoffman, Bob Cartwright, Frank Hutchins, Richard Cammarieri, Janice Adams, Geraldine Howard, John Jacobi, Charles Crawford, Frank Morris, Francine Christopher, Addis Brooks, Roberta Moore, Eloise Washington, Sam Rivers, Elon Watson, Cindy Williams, Steve Finn, Nancy Zak, Yvonne Walker, Frances Houston, and Geraldine Maybin. Thanks to Newark Coalition For Neighborhoods, Black United Fund, and the Campaign for Human Development for financial support for this issue.



Numbers Every Tenant Should Know...

- Newark Rent Control Board
Staff: 733-3675
Administrator: 733-6362
Copies of rent control ordinance.
- Rutgers Urban Legal Clinic
15 Washington St.
648-5576
- Newark City Clerk's Office
733-3844 or 733-3669.
To find out about city ordinances.
- Landlord Tenant Court
621-5343 or 621-5346.
- Essex-Newark Legal Services
106 Halsey St.
624-4500
- Essex-Newark Legal Services
Senior Citizen Unit
672-3838, -3839, -3840, 3895.
- Rutgers Legal Aid Clinic
15 Washington St.
624-5300
- Hispanic Unit,
Essex Newark Legal Services
1100 Raymond Blvd.
642-8707, 642-8700
- Newark Offices of Code Enforcement
733-6470, 733-6471, 733-6481
- Newark Municipal Council
733-3788
- Ironbound Community Corp.
344-7210
- Essex County Welfare Department
733-3059, 733-3000

Newark Coalition For Neighborhoods

by Richard Cammarieri

We've all heard the words: "New Newark, Renaissance City". It sounds good, but who really benefits? **Newark Coalition For Neighborhoods (NCN)** is trying to make sure that Newark residents get a fair share of the benefits of jobs and housing from revitalization. Newark's Renaissance should help **all** Newark's residents, not just focus on downtown.

NCN can help organize tenant groups and block associations. We provide presentations, training and tip sheets. Some of these are:

- * Starting A Tenant Group
- * ByLaws for Community Groups
- * Basic Record-Keeping
- * Leadership Structure
- * How To Increase Participation
- * Effective Meetings
- * Effective Outreach
- * Community Research

In addition to these, NCN also sponsors community forums about **Fair Banking**. Neighborhood residents would receive information about home improvement loans, mortgage loans, and low cost savings and checking accounts.

For more information, or to set up a presentation, contact Richard Cammarieri, NCN, 944 Broad St., Newark, N.J., (201) 643-7711.



Do You Know Your Rights?

Know Your Rights Fact Sheets are available for tenants. They cover:

1) The Just Cause For Eviction Law: This covers the legal reasons for eviction.

2) Local Ordinances - This fact sheet covers most of Newark's local ordinances which relate to housing.

If you would like to get copies, call Nancy Zak, 344-7210.

Homeowners In Trouble Too

Tenants are not the only ones having a hard time in the housing market these days. According to the Consumers League of New Jersey, New Jersey is the second worst state in the nation in its rate of mortgage foreclosures. In the 3 years, from 1988 to 1991, foreclosures have **tripled**, from 8,182 to 23,575. The Consumers League of New Jersey's newsletter says, "Not since the Great Depression has the situation been as grim." (League Newsletter, March 1992, Volume 55, No.1)

Spanish Videotape About Tenant Organizing Available

Techos Y Derechos: This is a tape in Spanish about how, when, and why to organize a Tenants' Association in your building. Lots of music, professional quality. It is an excellent resource. Contact Nancy Zak, 344-7210.

The **Coalition To Save Rent Control (CTSRC)** & the **HUD Tenants' Coalition** have been volunteer organizations that help provide information on tenant rights and assists individual tenants in organizing their buildings. Clip this coupon and return it with any amount of money you can contribute to help continue this work.

- ☐ Here's my \$5 donation to this newsletter, keep it coming.
- ☐ I can't afford to subscribe, but keep me on the mailing list.
- ☐ Here's my subscription and a donation to help work for Tenant Awareness and Rights in Newark.
- ☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐
- ☐ \$
- ☐
- other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Checks should be made out to:

NCN - Tenant Project

and sent to NCN, 944 Broad St., Newark, N.J. 07102

Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry
525 Orange St.
Newark, New Jersey 07107

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